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ABSTRACT

The escalation of youth violence is one of the major public health concerns of the United States. Many factors today make juveniles more likely to commit, or to become victims of, violent acts. Drugs, the availability of guns, and the emergence of gang problems in all regions of the country are among the causes of youth violence. Prevention of violence involves a continuum of care that starts at the beginning of a child's life, and continues through late adolescence. Delinquency is least likely to progress to adult criminality when the juvenile forms long-term relationships and the juvenile is able to obtain gainful employment. A section on "Federal Programs of Note" profiles Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT), Safe Futures Partnerships To Reduce Youth Violence and Delinquency, and Youth Violence Prevention Projects. The regular section, "The CIS (Communities in Schools) Connection" describes a survey of violence prevention programs, 91 of which were part of the CIS network. Also included in this issue is a discussion of vital statistics in state education, which notes the enrollment, school system size, finances, and student characteristics of state school systems. The "Recent Research Reports" section highlights some trends that are important to the educational community, such as a decline in teenage births and a decline in reading achievement scores. (SLD)

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You Can Use

Seeds of Help

Youth Violence: Prevention and Prevention

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Volume 1, Number 3 *Winter 1997*

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COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS
Helping kids to help themselves

CIS You Can Use

Seeds of Help

Volume 1, Number 3 **Winter 1997**

It made headlines in most national newspapers: On February 6, 1997, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a report confirming that the United States has the highest rates of childhood homicide, suicide and firearms-related deaths of any of the world's 26 wealthiest nations. Nearly 75 percent of murders of children in the industrialized world occur in our country.

Furthermore, the report documents that younger and younger children are becoming perpetrators as well as victims. Juvenile crime in the U.S. is increasing at a much faster rate than adult crime.

The main theme of this issue of *Facts You Can Use—Seeds of Help* addresses this urgent and tragic subject. "Youth Violence: Prediction and Prevention" offers help to communities and schools struggling to understand the causes of the violence epidemic, and find effective methods to safeguard children from its ravages. "The CIS Connection" provides an overview of the juvenile violence issue as reflected in a survey of CIS programs. We also spotlight the successful violence prevention efforts of the High Point, North Carolina, and Fort Worth, Texas, Communities In Schools programs.

***Communities In Schools** is the nation's largest stay-in-school network. CIS champions the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life.*

During the 1995-96 school year, Communities In Schools reached more than 262,000 young people and their families, through 1,025 schools that served 295 communities in 28 states.

In This Issue

Youth Violence: Prediction and Prevention 2

State Education Vital Statistics 8

Federal Programs of Note 15

Recent Research Reports 18

The CIS Connection 21

Youth Violence: Prediction and Prevention

The escalation of youth violence is one of the major public health concerns of our nation, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention[1] The case is easily made by these statistics:

- Starting in 1985, violent crimes committed by juveniles have skyrocketed, yet at the same time violent crimes committed by adults over the age of 24 have either remained the same or decreased.[2]

- The overall homicide rate in the U.S. from 1985 to 1992 increased as a direct result of the staggering increase in homicides by juveniles, which doubled while homicides by adults decreased.[2]

- In only six years, between 1986 and 1992, the number of children killed by firearms rose by 144 percent.[1]

- Teenage boys in all racial and ethnic groups are more likely to die from gunshot wounds than from all natural deaths combined.[1]

- Demographic experts predict another doubling in the rate of arrests of juveniles for violent crimes by 2010, given population growth projections and trends in juvenile arrests over the past several decades.[1]

Why the Increases in Violent Crimes Involving Juveniles?

Many factors today make juveniles more likely to commit, and to become victims of, violent crimes than in the recent past. One reason often cited is the spread of crack cocaine, which started about 1985. Once crack began to be widely distributed on the streets of America's cities, juveniles were recruited to be the street dealers. The adult dealers knew that juvenile courts were likely to be more lenient than criminal courts, so their young associates would tend to be back at "work" sooner. Then too, the drug trade can be more lucrative in the

"Once crack began to be widely distributed on the streets of America's cities, juveniles were recruited to be the street dealers."

short run than any legitimate job available to juveniles, and this helped to entice children into the drug milieu.[2]

The second reason commonly given for the rise in youth violence is the availability of illegal guns, which are widely used by drug dealers as a tool of the trade and quickly infiltrate entire communities, creating easy access to firearms and a prevailing climate of violence.[2]

Another disturbing trend that contributes to the increase in juvenile violence is the emergence of gang problems in all regions of the U.S. While gangs have long histories in some urban areas, such as Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City and Philadelphia, in the last 20 years they have troubled other large cities, smaller cities, suburbs and rural communities.

More recently, in 1995 the largest gang study to date[5] surveyed more than 4,000 police and sheriff's departments across the country and gathered data from 3,440 (83 percent) of them. This study, which will be repeated annually by the National Youth Gang Center, draws a much more comprehensive picture of the gang problem. The responding agencies reported an estimated total of 664,906 gang members, over half concentrated in three states: California, Illinois, and Texas. California, by itself, accounted for over 250,000 youth gang members, concentrated in the greater Los Angeles area. Chicago police estimated 33,000 gang members. No other jurisdictions reported more than about 10,000. However, "No state is gang-free. Few large cities are gang-free. Half the respondents reporting youth gang problems in 1995 serve populations under 25,000. And youth gangs are emerging in new localities, especially smaller and rural locations."[5]

The NYGC study reports a correspondingly large number of youth gangs — 23,388 in 1995. The average number of gangs in cities was 12 (the median was four), and the average number of gangs in counties surrounding cities was 23 (the median was five). More than half of the jurisdictions with less than 100,000 population reported one to nine gangs; 66 percent of jurisdictions with populations above 250,000 reported 30 or more gangs each, with an average gang membership of 33 youths.[5]

Although gangs are believed to account for large increases in overall crime rates, the evidence isn't clear. Law enforcement agencies in the 110 jurisdictions studied reported only 46,000 gang-related crimes — less than one crime per year for every five gang members. Official records, however, may not reflect the actual criminal activities of gang members. At the same time, it is clear that most of the gang crimes reported *were* violent crimes: Homicide (2.3 percent) and other violent crime (48.5 percent) made up more than half the crimes reported, followed by property crime (14.8 percent), drug-related crime (10.3 percent), and vice (2.9 percent), with other crimes accounting for the remaining 21.2 percent.[7]

It also appears that gang-involved juveniles engage in more violent behavior than non-gang delinquents, and that gang-related violence has increased since the late 1980s. Surprisingly, though, the bulk of gang violence is *not* a cause or consequence of drug dealing. It is more often related to status and territorial disputes with members of other gangs. The most common victims of gang assaults are other gang members. In fact, researchers have found that most street-gang structures do not organizationally support drug distribution, although individual members may be involved.[7]

What Underlies the Youth Violence Epidemic?

Juvenile participation in the drug trade, membership in gangs, and the violence that has ensued are the end products of many factors at work in the lives of youth caught in this nightmare scenario.

To treat the youth violence epidemic, these underlying risk factors need to be identified and addressed through appropriate strategies that promote related protective factors that enable children to become resilient. Hawkins and Catalano's risk and resiliency theory[4] identifies risk factors for youth violence at four different levels or domains.

Once the risk factors are known and children with these factors are identified, programs can be developed to prevent the onset of violent behavior.

Often violence and delinquency are considered as problems to be addressed at the beginning of adolescence, but research has shown that the seeds of juvenile violence and delinquency can be sown as early as the beginning of a mother's pregnancy.[8] Prevention involves

Risk Factors for Juvenile Violence [3]

Neighborhoods

Availability of guns

Availability of drugs

Community laws/norms (*favorable to drug use, guns, and crime*)

Media portrayals of violence (*teach violent problem-solving strategies and alter sensitivity to violence*)

Low neighborhood attachment/community disorganization

Extreme economic deprivation

Families

Poor family management practices:

- Absence of clear expectations and standards of behavior
- Excessively severe or inconsistent punishment
- Parental failure to monitor children

Family conflict

Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in violent behavior

Physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or neglect by parents

Schools

Persistent or early onset of antisocial behavior

Persistent or early academic failure

Lack of commitment to school

Association with peers who engage in violent or problem behaviors

Individual/Peer

Alienation and rebelliousness

Lack of impulse control

Sensation seeking

Constitutional factors (for example, the role of heredity in addiction)

a continuum of care that starts at the beginning of a child's life and continues through late adolescence. All developmental stages of a child's life should be considered in creating violence and delinquency prevention programs.

Developmental Stages and Prevention of Violence

Prenatal/Perinatal

Prenatal and perinatal medical care has been shown to reduce delinquency by reducing related risk factors such as child abuse and neglect. In addition, home visits by nurses before and immediately after birth have been shown to decrease such abuse and enhance parenting.[8]

Birth to Age 4

Family and child bonding, parenting skills, learning readiness and social skill development are fundamental prerequisites to reducing the risks for juvenile violence and delinquency.[9] Interventions targeting families and children in the first five years of life may be the most powerful delinquency prevention strategies that exist.[8] Effective strategies include: behavior training that decreases "negative parenting," a coercive style of interacting that promotes child aggression and delinquent behavior later in life; and Head Start programs, which promote learning readiness and social skill development.

Ages 4 - 6

Learning readiness and social competence skill-building can help to develop early attachment to school as a positive experience and decrease the chances of academic failure.[8, 9] Effective strategies include: reductions in class size for kindergarten and 1st grade, which helps improve school performance[8] and the Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (Paths) Curriculum, which reduces early antisocial behavior by integrating emotional, cognitive and behavioral skill development in children.[8]

Ages 7 - 12

Meaningful, challenging opportunities to contribute to family, school, peers and community in developmentally appropriate ways promote the development of life skills needed for adult roles.[3, 4]

"Interventions targeting families and children in the first five years of life may be the most powerful delinquency prevention strategies that exist."

The development of self-esteem through recognition of the child's efforts and confirmation of his or her individual worth, along with incentives to continue with activities, all promote stability and self-respect. These in turn make it easier to avoid risky behavior and peer pressure to engage in such behavior.[3]

Comprehensive neighborhood-based programs that help children develop positive life skills give them support and direction and create opportunities for community involvement and service. A Columbia University study has shown that Boys and Girls Clubs of America has been effective in increasing rates of school attendance and improving academic performance. Clubs in housing projects have reduced the juvenile crime rate by 13 percent.[4]

Other effective strategies include: cooperative learning programs that allow students to work in teams to assess progress and prepare for tests; anger management and conflict resolution skills training; substance abuse prevention programs; family strengthening programs; and tutoring.

Adolescence (Ages 13 - 18)

Continuing in school, positive peer models and, for older adolescents, opportunities for work lead to successful youth. Programs that are effective with this age group include: cultural awareness programs, environmental work projects, job placement, after-school activities, employment skill-building, gang intervention, leadership-skill development, vocational training, mentoring programs, recreation and sports programs, and curfews.[6]

Grassroots community coalitions strengthen and mobilize communities, enabling residents to recognize and solve their own problems. Community partnerships that involve local police, the media, and business and civic organizations create neighborhood crime watches and cleanups, giving all members of the community an opportunity to apply their expertise where it is most effective.[8] For example, The Oakland (Calif.) Community Organization brought together local citizens, law enforcement and municipal regulatory agencies to eliminate drug activity in their neighborhood. They organized a neighborhood cleanup and closed more than 300 drug houses.[9]

The final step to developing violence-free juveniles is to strengthen communities through investments in economic, social and physical infrastructures so opportunities exist for future employment.

Some Useful Resources

Provisions relating to curfews in U.S. cities with a population of more than 100,000 can be found in the "Source Book of Criminal Justice Statistics - 1994," published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The National Crime Prevention Council distributes an action kit, "Partner with the Media to Build Safer Communities," that includes reproducible materials to help communities reach the public with their anti-violence messages.

Copies of the "National Juvenile Justice Action Plan" report (NCJ 157106) can be obtained by calling the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (1-800-638-8736) or by ordering by e-mail request at asknjrs@aspensys.com/.

How to Turn Around Juveniles Who Are Delinquent

Crime rates typically peak in the late teens. Delinquency is least likely to progress to adult criminality when (a) the juvenile forms long-term relationships, and (b) the juvenile is able to obtain gainful employment.[1]

Society's persistent reliance on incarceration appears to make it harder for delinquent youth to form healthy bonds or find employment. For first-time offenders and non-violent repeat offenders, the U.S. Department of Justice recommends graduated sanctions, with immediate intervention (community restitution, day treatment centers, diversion programs and protective supervision projects). In addition to the positive benefits for the young person, these programs cost much less than the $35,000 to $60,000 a year required to incarcerate one juvenile in a state training school.[1, 9]

Intermediate sanctions (residential and nonresidential community-based programs, weekend detention, intensive supervision, probation, wilderness programs, and boot camps) are recommended for first-time serious and repeat offenders, and some violent offenders.[9]

Secure confinement (community confinement in small, secure treatment facilities, or incarceration in training schools, camps and ranches) is recommended only for violent and serious repeat offenders. These sanctions provide separation for community safety and from other youths who can benefit from treatment and rehabilitation. Once reintegration from confinement is attempted, support services, frequent follow-up, and counseling, along with positive alternatives to crime, should be provided to discourage future involvement in crime and crime-related behaviors.[6, 9]

Effective strategies to prevent recidivism include:

- *Continuous case management;*
- *Careful emphasis on reintegration and re-entry services;*
- *Opportunities for youth achievements and program decision making;*
- *Clear and consistent consequences for misconduct;*
- *Enriched education and vocational programming; and*
- *A diversity of forms of family and individual counseling matched to adolescent needs.[1]*

Indeed, these strategies are effective components of all juvenile violence prevention programs.

Youth Violence

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2. Hawkins, J.D. (1995). "Controlling Crime Before It Happens: Risk-Focused Prevention." *National Institute of Justice Journal (229)*, U.S. Department of Justice. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

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4. Jones, M., and B. Krisberg. (July 1994). *Images and Reality: Juvenile Crime, Youth Violence and Public Policy*. National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Washington, D.C.: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

5. National Youth Gang Center. "1995 National Youth Gang Survey." Washington, D.C.: OJJDP, forthcoming.

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7. Snyder, H.N., and M. Sickmund. (August 1995). *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Center for Juvenile Justice.

8. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs. (November 1995). *Delinquency Prevention Works: Program Summary*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

9. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs. (March 1996). *Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan: Summary*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

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State Education Vital Statistics

The provision of public education is one of the chief functions delegated to the states, rather than the federal government, by the United States Constitution. States are free to organize and fund their schools according to their own history and local preferences, resources and needs.

Differences in expenditures, for example, are largely a result of differences in the size of the state's population and enrollment. The diversity of the population, particularly the presence of large numbers of students with special needs, and the concentration of the majority of pupils within a few major cities, also have direct and varying effects on the costs of providing public education.

These obvious factors, however, do not account entirely for either budgets or school organization. Historically, the citizens of some states have been more willing and able to support public education than others, creating an uneven distribution of educational resources that has not yet been eliminated, despite a growing demand for education equity.

Before equity can be reached, however, the differences themselves need to be clear. The table on pages 10-11 is created from data appearing in the just-published volume *Quality Counts, A Report Card on the Condition of Public Education in the 50 States; A Supplement to "Education Week."* It provides 1995 state-by-state data for a number of significant education-related variables.

How do the states compare within this profile? Where does your state fit into this complex picture?

State Education System Size

Size of the education system is measured in this table by the student enrollment, the number of schools and the number of school districts. Annual expenditures are also a dimension of size. Not surprisingly, as the statistics show, the states are very unequal in terms of sheer size.

State Education Statistics

State-level children's programs (such as the 16 Communities In Schools state programs) need accurate data when doing strategic planning, crafting evaluations, and applying for grants. The variables tabulated on pages 10-11 have been shown to have a clear impact on student needs and outcomes.

The Distribution of Student Enrollment

The number of students enrolled in the 50 states ranges from 100,369 pupils in Wyoming to 5,407,000 in California — an overall range of over 5.3 million students. The average enrollment is 882,180 pupils.

- There are 10 states with fewer than 200,000 pupils: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming.

- Ten states enroll between 200,000 and 500,000: Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and West Virginia.

- Eleven states enroll more than 500,000 but less than 800,000: Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Oregon and South Carolina.

- Seven states enroll more than 800,000 but less than 1 million: Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin.

- Twelve states enroll more than 1 million pupils. These 12 largest states enroll more than half of the 44.11 million pupils in the United States — 25.732 million students. These states are, in order from the largest: California (5.4 million+), Texas (3.6 million+), New York (2.7 million+), Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, New Jersey, North Carolina and Virginia.

Schools and School Districts Related to Pupil Enrollments

The overall range in the number of public schools is 7,639: from 182 in Delaware to 7,821 in California. The average number of schools across the U.S. is 1,694 per state.

The overriding factor that accounts for the number of schools is the number of pupils enrolled, as would be expected. There are some notable exceptions, however. Both Missouri and Wisconsin enroll between 800,000 and 1 million pupils, but the number of schools in both states (about 2,000) is comparable to that in states

TABLE 1. STATE BY STATE PUBLIC EDUCATION STATISTICS												
State	Total Population	Annual K - 12 Expend.	No. School Districts	No. Public Schools	Total K - 12 Enrollment	% MIN	% DIS	% URB	% SUB	% RUR	% Child. in Poverty	% in Single-Parent Family
US	262.755 million	$243.868 billion	14,400	84,705	44.109 million	35	10	29	32	39	21 %	26%
AL	4.253 m	3.034 b	127	1,309	736,472	38	12	20	30	50	23	26
AK	603,617	1.139 b	55	478	127,057	35	12	35	6	59	13	28
AZ	4.218 m	3.114 b	215	1,099	737,424	42	8	55	20	25	22	26
AR	2.484 m	1.428 b	312	1,072	447,565	26	10	22	8	70	23	23
CA	31.589 m	25.385 b	1,001	7,821	5.407 m	59	9	32	50	18	24	26
CO	3.747 m	3.267 b	176	1,407	640,521	27	9	28	41	31	15	25
CN	3.275 m	3.944 b	166	1,039	506,824	27	13	33	35	33	17	24
DE	717,197	708.587m	19	182	106,813	35	12	12	42	46	11	27
FL	14.166 m	11.017 b	67	2,727	2.109 m	41	12	49	36	15	25	30
GA	7.201 m	5.840 b	181	1,767	1.271 m	41	9	20	32	48	23	29
HI	1.187 m	807.600m	1	242	183,795	77	7	32	54	15	15	23
ID	1.163 m	975.377m	112	601	240,448	11	8	13	27	60	18	17
IL	11.830 m	10.116 b	914	4,120	1.916 m	36	11	32	42	26	21	26
IN	5.803 m	5.369 b	292	1,860	968,933	14	11	23	27	50	19	27
IA	2.842 m	2.608 b	389	1,549	499,550	7	11	30	12	58	13	20
KS	2.565 m	2.465 b	304	1,490	460,838	17	10	12	16	72	16	21
KY	3.860 m	3.507 b	176	1,342	657,642	11	10	18	17	66	27	24
LA	4.342 m	3.397 b	66	1,459	797,933	49	10	32	19	49	35	32
ME	1.241 m	1.245 b	228	701	212,601	3	12	13	8	79	19	24
MD	5.042 m	4.842 b	24	1,263	790,938	42	11	14	65	21	15	26
MA	6.074 m	5.902 b	348	1,800	893,724	21	15	25	46	29	16	26
MI	9.549 m	9.859 b	555	3,426	1.615 m	23	10	21	38	41	22	28
MN	4.610 m	5.675 b	394	1,908	821,693	12	10	11	33	56	18	26
MS	2.697 m	1.919 b	153	890	505,962	52	11	11	20	69	33	30
MO	5.324 m	3.860 b	530	2,098	878,541	18	12	13	40	48	21	26
MT	870,281	892.000m	471	899	164,341	12	9	17	11	72	18	25
NB	1.637 m	1.441 b	662	1,396	287,100	12	12	22	11	67	13	19
NV	1.530 m	1.155 b	17	418	250,747	31	9	56	10	35	16	26
NH	1.148 m	1.131 b	164	458	189,319	3	11	21	9	70	11	22
NJ	7.945 m	10.959 b	582	2,295	1.174 m	37	14	19	59	22	15	23

TABLE I. STATE BY STATE PUBLIC EDUCATION STATISTICS												
State	**Total Population**	**Annual K - 12 Expend.**	**No. School Districts**	**No. Public Schools**	**Total K - 12 Enrollment**	**% MIN**	**% DIS**	**% URB**	**% SUB**	**% RUR**	**% Child. in Poverty**	**% in Single-Parent Family**
NM	1.685 m	1.695 b	89	713	327,248	60	13	28	25	47	27	25
NY	18.136 m	23.295 b	711	4,125	2.766 m	42	11	44	28	29	25	29
NC	7.195 m	6.016 b	119	1,960	1.156 m	35	10	28	14	58	20	26
ND	641,367	540.858m	238	583	119,288	10	9	25	12	63	15	19
OH	11.151 m	9.866 b	611	3,684	1.814 m	18	11	27	33	40	19	25
OK	3.278 m	2.331 b	551	1,817	609,718	30	10	21	26	53	23	23
OR	3.141 m	2.880 b	246	1,209	521,945	14	11	24	44	32	15	23
PA	12.072 m	12.071 b	500	3,120	1.766 m	19	10	17	39	44	17	22
RI	989,794	1.036 b	36	305	147,487	20	14	31	46	23	17	28
SC	3.673 m	2.856 b	95	1,051	648,673	43	11	17	25	58	24	28
SD	729,034	618.003m	173	823	143,482	16	9	13	7	81	17	20
TN	5.256 m	3.613 b	138	1,508	881,355	25	12	27	23	50	24	30
TX	18.724 m	18.373 b	1,044	6,465	3.677 m	53	10	46	19	35	25	23
UT	1.951 m	1.623 b	40	728	474,675	9	10	21	45	34	12	16
VT	584,771	663,683m	251	371	104,533	3	8	5	0	95	13	22
VA	6.618 m	5.599 b	133	1,764	1.061 m	33	11	33	31	36	13	22
WA	5.431 m	5.368 b	296	1,907	938,314	21	9	30	39	31	14	25
WV	1.828 m	1.783 b	55	848	310,511	5	12	19	15	67	29	24
WS	5.123 m	5.461 b	427	2,030	860,686	16	10	34	15	51	14	24
WY	480,184	582.386m	49	404	100,369	11	10	14	16	70	13	21

Table created by Linda Britt from data in Ronald A. Wolk, editor. (January 22, 1997) *Quality Counts, A Report Card on the Condition of Public Education In the 50 States; A Supplement to Education Week.* Washington, D.C.: Editorial Projects in Education Inc. pp. 61-235.

Table 1 Key:

Total Population: The population of the state in 1995, with "m" indicating millions. Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.
Annual K-12 Expenditures: Published estimates of the total dollars expended, with "m" indicating millionsand "b" indicating billions of dollars, for school year 1994-95, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.
Number of School Districts: 1995 data from NCES, US DOEd.
Number of Public Schools: 1995 data from NCES, US DOEd.
Total K - 12 Enrollment: 1995 data from NCES, US DOEd.
% MIN (percent of pupils who are minority): 1995 data from NCES, US DOEd.
% DIS (percent of pupils with disabilities): 1995 data from Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, US DOEd.
% URB (percent of pupils in urban schools): 1994 data from NCES, US DOEd.
% SUB (percent of pupils in suburban and large town schools): 1994 data from NCES, US DOEd.
% RUR (percent of pupils in rural and small town schools): 1994 data from NCES, US DOEd.
% Children in Poverty: 1993 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census.
% Pupils from Single Parent Families: 1993 data from U.S. Bureau of the Census.

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enrolling between 1 and 1.5 million. At the other end of the schools range, Mississippi, which enrolls more than 500,000 students, has only 890 schools. Montana has about the same number of schools (899), but enrolls about one-third the number of students.

The number of school districts per state ranges from one district in Hawaii to 1,044 in Texas. California and Illinois also have more than 800 districts. Maryland appears to have a disproportionately small number of districts — only 24 in a state with about 791,000 pupils and more than 1,250 schools.

Annual Expenditures

The average annual expenditure across all 50 states is $4.877 billion. The range, however, is enormous, from about $540 million in North Dakota to over $25.3 billion in California. Texas follows California, with annual expenditures of over $18.3 billion. Only eight states have annual expenditures of less than $1 billion: Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming.

It should be noted that the variance in local expenditures within states can be very large. Thus it can be misleading to calculate average per-pupil expenditures based on the state's total annual expenditures.

Student Characteristics

In addition to size, a state's education system can be described in terms of the students it serves. The descriptive statistics reported here are all demographic data that have been shown to be relevant to educational attainment. These characteristics also furnish information for decisions about providing appropriate educational materials and programs. They include the proportion of students who are minority group members, who are recognized as disabled, who live in poverty and who live in single-parent families, as well as the students' proportional geographic distribution between urban, suburban/large towns, and small cities/rural areas.

At first glance, what is striking about these statistics is how much they vary from state to state on each characteristic except disabilities. Also noteworthy are the large proportions of children in single-parent families and living in poverty in almost all states. Finally, the data remind us that there are many different minority

groups, and that they make up a significant proportion of the population in most regions of the country.

Minority Pupils

While 35 percent of all students in the United States are members of a minority group, five states enroll a majority of students who are members of such groups: Hawaii (77 percent), New Mexico (60 percent), California (59 percent), Texas (53 percent), and Mississippi (52 percent).

Other states with above-average (35 percent) minority enrollment include Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York and South Carolina.

States that enroll 10 percent or less of their pupils from minority populations include Iowa, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Utah, Vermont and West Virginia. These states' populations are also predominantly rural or small town. It should be remembered, however, that the rural nature of a state does not predict small concentrations of minority populations, as New Mexico and Mississippi demonstrate. Urbanization also may not correlate with *large* proportions of minority students, as Ohio (18 percent), Pennsylvania (19 percent) and Michigan (23 percent) show.

The range in proportion of enrollment of minority students is 74 percentage points, from 3 percent in Maine to 77 percent in Hawaii.

Pupils with Disabilities

Disability status is relatively evenly distributed, from 7 percent in Hawaii to 15 percent in Massachusetts. The national average is 10 percent.

Children in Poverty

The national proportion of public-school pupils living in poverty is 21 percent — more than one in every five students. It is startling to see how unevenly poverty is distributed, though. In Louisiana, slightly more than one in three students (35 percent) live in poverty; in Delaware and New Hampshire, slightly more than one in 10 (11 percent). The range is 24 percentage points.

In 17 states, the number of students living in poverty exceeds the 21-percent national average. Those states with the highest proportion of poverty-level students include Louisiana (35 percent), Mississippi (33 percent), West Virginia (29 percent) and Kentucky (27 percent).

"The national proportion of public-school pupils living in poverty is 21 percent — more than one in every five students. It is startling to see how unevenly poverty is distributed, though."

Children in Single-Parent Families

Nationally, 26 percent of school pupils are living in a single-parent family. The range between states is considerably smaller than the range in proportion of students living in poverty: There are few states with very small numbers of these students, and there are few states with very high numbers. The range is from 32 percent to 16 percent, for an overall range of 16 percentage points.

Utah (16 percent), Idaho (17 percent), North Dakota (19 percent) and Nebraska (19 percent) are fortunate to enroll less than 20 percent of their students from single-parent families.

States with 30 percent or more of their students from single-parent families include Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Population Concentration

Despite the media focus on large cities, the great majority of pupils in the United States live in rural and small-town America — a full 70 percent. Large cities garner the attention, and they also capture most of the national demonstration programs, simply because it is most efficient to concentrate efforts and dollars where there are large numbers of people who can be involved. To reach the majority of all students, however, many more locations will need to be participants.

Twenty-four states enroll the majority of their students from rural areas and small towns. Only two states, Arizona and Nevada, enroll the majority of their students from large cities, and only a few states enroll more than 35 percent of their students in urban schools.

States with 50 percent or more rural and small-town students include Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

States with 50 percent or more suburban students include California, Hawaii, Maryland and New Jersey. Nine states enroll less than half, but more than 35 percent, suburban students: Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, Oregon, Rhode Island and Utah.

States with large concentrations of urban students (over 35 percent) include Alaska, Florida, New York, Texas and, as mentioned, Arizona and Nevada.

"Despite the media focus on large cities, the great majority of pupils in the United States live in rural and small-town America — a full 70 percent."

FEDERAL PROGRAMS OF NOTE

Federal Programs

❖ *Coordinating Federal Crime Prevention Programs*

☑ *The President's Crime Prevention Council*

The President's Crime Prevention Council was created by Congress in the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act. The council coordinates federal crime prevention programs and encourages community-based crime prevention efforts.

One of the most visible and useful products of the council is *Preventing Crime and Promoting Responsibility: 50 Programs That Help Communities Help Their Youth*. This 98-page book describes 50 federal programs, drawn from a variety of departments and agencies, that work with local communities to prevent crime and violence. The book also includes a planning tool, "Developing a Comprehensive Crime Prevention Strategy." *Preventing Crime and Promoting Responsibility* is available for $8.00 from the U.S. Government Printing Office.

The following three federal programs are discussed in the Crime Prevention Council's book, and may be of special interest to Communities In Schools practitioners and other community leaders working with youth.

❖ *"Positive Impact" for G.R.E.A.T. Program*

☑ *Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.)*

G.R.E.A.T. is a project of the Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and is funded at $11 million for FY 1997.

The objectives of the G.R.E.A.T. program are to help children resist the pressure to join gangs and to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. It is a structured, school-based program now being implemented across the country in communities where gang activity exists or is emerging. G.R.E.A.T. provides classroom instruction and related activities to 7th graders, helping them learn to set goals, have self-respect, resist pressure to join gangs, make sound choices, and resolve conflicts without violence. Other components include drug education and sensitivity to cultural differences.

The G.R.E.A.T. curriculum is offered one period a week for nine weeks, taught by trained, uniformed police officers and federal agents. An optional four-week curriculum for 3rd and 4th graders is also available. An integral part of the G.R.E.A.T. program is the follow-up summer project, which provides the opportunity to reinforce lessons learned in the classroom in a less structured, one-on-one setting.

Preliminary findings from a national evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program show that the approximately 2,600 participating 7th graders reported lower rates of delinquency and gang affiliation, more positive attitudes toward police, and more negative attitudes toward gangs, among other positive effects.

For more information, contact Tom Schneider, special agent in charge, ATF G.R.E.A.T. program branch, at (800) 726-7070.

❖ *Filling Gaps in the Continuum of Care*

☑ *SafeFutures Partnerships to Reduce Youth Violence and Delinquency*

The Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention supports six communities through the SafeFutures Partnerships. The aim is to use existing federal, state, local and private partnerships to prevent and reduce juvenile crime and provide a continuum of care for youth at all ages and all stages of development, with a particular focus on juvenile offenders.

SafeFutures stresses the importance of partnership-building and community responsiveness and planning. It provides funding to identify and assess the need for various supportive programs that assist the community to fill identified gaps in its continuum of care.

The six communities are Boston; Contra Costa County, Calif.; Seattle; St. Louis; Imperial County, Calif.; and Fort Belknap Indian Community, Harlem, Mont. These sites have made substantial progress in assessing their delinquency problem and have developed a plan that includes prevention, intervention (including graduated sanctions) and treatment services for delinquent youth and youth at risk of delinquency.

SafeFutures, funded at $7.9 million for FY 1997, is notable for the comprehensiveness of its approach: It addresses all age groups and offers services at a variety of sites. For more information, contact Kristen Kracke, program manager, at (202) 307-5914.

❖ *Violence and Public Health*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention takes a comprehensive public health approach to solving the problem of youth violence. The Youth Violence Prevention Projects, funded at $10.04 million for FY 1997, undertake community demonstrations of multiple interventions and evaluation research on youth violence.

Beginning in FY 1992, CDC funded 12 one- to three-year cooperative agreements to evaluate specific interventions that may reduce injuries and deaths related to interpersonal violence among adolescents and young adults. Strategies have included behavioral education, parent training, modification of school atmosphere, neighborhood violence prevention advocacy, summer employment and evaluation and research. Funded projects have used settings that include schools, hospitals, public housing, community-based organizations, and public areas.

For more information, contact Mark Long, public health adviser, at (770) 488-4224.

Federal Programs

☑ *Youth Violence Prevention Projects*

RECENT RESEARCH REPORTS

❖ *Teenage Births Drop for Third Straight Year*

The birth rate for 15- to 19-year-olds dropped from 59.6 births per 1,000 population in 1993 to 58.9 births per 1,000 in 1994, according to the "Advance Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1994," prepared by the National Center for Health Statistics, a part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The 1994 birth rate for this age group was 5 percent lower than the recent high of 62.1 in 1991. Recent declines in abortion rates and birth rates for teenagers indicate that the teenage pregnancy rate has also fallen in the 1990s. Despite this recent decline, the 1994 rate was still higher than in any year during the period from 1974 to 1989.

A more detailed analysis, "Recent Declines in Teenage Birth Rates in the United States: Variations by State, 1990-94," looks at differences among the states and among racial and ethnic groups and presents rates for each state. This study reports the following highlights:

Race and Ethnic Group Comparisons

- Rates have declined steadily for African American teenagers and generally have been on a downward trend for white teenagers. Rates for Hispanic teenagers have been less consistent.

- Overall rates for both younger (15-17) and older (18-19) teens have been declining.

- More than 75 percent of teen births are to unmarried teenagers.

State-by-State Comparisons

The majority of states experienced a decline in teenage childbearing from 1991 to 1994, but there is still great variation among states.

***R*ecent Reports**

☑ *"Advance Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1994"*

- The state with the largest decline was Maine, followed by Vermont, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. About half the states had declines between 5 and 11 percent, but 13 states and the District of Columbia did not change significantly. In general, the states with the lowest rates showed the greatest decline.

- In 1994, birth rates for teenagers 15 to 19 ranged from a high of 114.7 per 1,000 in the District of Columbia to a low of 30.1 in New Hampshire. In general, the 10 states with the highest rates were located in the South or West while the lowest rates were in the Northeast and Midwest. The same regional variation was evident in each age subgroup (15 to 17 and 18 to 19).

- Differences in the ethnicity of the teenage populations account for some of the differences in overall rates among the states, since birth rates for Hispanic and African American teenagers are more than double the rates for non-Hispanic white teenagers.

- When state rates are analyzed separately by race and ethnicity, some geographic patterns emerge. For example, rates for non-Hispanic white teens are highest in the South. Thus the high teenage birth rates in the southern states are a result of high rates among all racial and ethnic groups.

Despite the recent decline in teenage birth rates, the current rates are still as high or higher than those of two decades ago. Teenage mothers are more likely to have low-birth-weight infants, to lack timely prenatal care and to smoke during pregnancy. There are long-term economic and social problems associated with teenage childbearing. The state-by-state data, consequently, provide valuable information to those evaluating teenage pregnancy prevention programs.

❖ *Reading Skills on the Decline*

"NAEP 1994 Trends in Academic Progress" is a first look at

Recent Reports

☑ *"The Advance Report of Final Natality Statistics, 1994" is available from the National Center for Health Statistics, 6525 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782; or by e-mail at: paoquery@nch10a.em.cdc.gov/.It is also available on the Internet at http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm/.*

☑ *"Recent Declines in Teenage Birth Rates in the United States: Variations by State, 1990-94" is available through the NCHS Public Affairs Office, (301) 436-7551; or by e-mail at: paoquery@nch10a.em.cdc.gov. It is also available on the Internet from the NCHS Home Page at http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww/nchshome.htm/.*

☑ *NAEP 1994 Trends in Academic Progress*

Recent Reports

the results of the 1994 reading assessment, which is part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The assessment measures the educational progress of students at grades 4, 8 and 12 in states that choose to participate. The following highlights represent the major findings presented in this report.

The most striking finding from the 1994 assessment is that the average reading proficiency of 12th-grade students declined significantly from 1992 to 1994. This decline was observed across a broad range of sub-groups. The percentage of 12th graders reaching the Proficient (highest) level in reading declined, accompanied by a decrease in the percentage of 12th graders at or above the Basic level.

Significant changes in average proficiency were not observed for the nation at grades 4 or 8.

Across all three grades, female students continued to display higher reading achievement than male students. The national decline in 12th-grade reading performance since 1992, however, was evident for both males and females.

Consistent with previous reports, reading proficiency at all grades was higher on average for students whose parents had more education. Among 12th graders, the decline in average reading proficiency since 1992 was evident at all levels of parental education.

In 1994, 4th, 8th and 12th graders attending non-public schools displayed higher average reading proficiency than their counterparts attending public schools. Both public-school and non-public-school 12th graders' performance declined since 1992.

Between 1992 and 1994, there were significant declines in average reading proficiency in eight jurisdictions — California, Delaware, Louisiana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Virginia.

☑ *The full 1994 report includes a state-by-state component at grade 4, as well as the national component at all three grades. It is available online at http://www.ed.gov/SEES/NAEP/.*

THE CIS CONNECTION

❖ *Violence Prevention in the CIS Network*

The national rise in youth violence (see "Youth Violence: Prediction and Prevention," page 2) is mirrored in the nearly 300 communities that comprise the CIS network of stay-in-school programs.

Sidney Davis, project specialist with the CIS, Inc. national office, has been tracking the network's efforts to prevent and abate violence among the youth reached by CIS programs. He points to several factors that CIS leaders have observed contributing to the rise in youth violence: "Number one is lack of jobs and job training. It breeds violence. Drugs and guns become instruments of survival" for communities where legitimate economic structures are weak or nonexistent. Then, too, increasing absence of one or both parents from the home is breaking down traditional family structures that helped give young people safety and security. Davis also notes the lack of participatory services in many communities, denying young people basic tools to learn conflict resolution and violence prevention techniques.

Providing those services is a goal of the Communities In Schools movement. "Prevention, abatement and character development are the three strategies" to turn around the violence epidemic, Davis says. He has initiated a process in which CIS programs can share their successful violence prevention efforts with each other. Critical to that process is an ongoing survey project that documents the CIS network's needs and responses to youth violence.

Survey Results

The survey has been administered twice, in the fall semester of 1995 and the fall semester of 1996. A total of 105 programs have responded to one or both administrations, including 91 (75 percent) operational CIS programs. Several key points emerged:

- Programs were asked to rate the severity of violence in their community on a scale of 1 to 10. As a group, over half (51

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percent) gave a rating of very high (7 - 10), 31 percent gave a rating of 5 or 6, and only 14 percent rated the severity as low (1 - 4).

- Size of the community is a factor, but location within a major metropolitan area is clearly related to perceptions of high levels of violence. For example, 83 percent of respondents in metropolitan suburban communities, 65 percent of respondents in cities and 63 percent of respondents in major metropolitan centers rate violence as very severe. On the other hand, 31 percent of respondents from rural communities also rate violence as very severe.

- Respondents indicated that violence is almost as great a problem at the middle/junior high level as at the high school level. Middle schools were selected as a problem by 63 programs and high schools by 75. Only four programs report that violence is a problem at the elementary level.

- The majority of CIS programs (59 percent) report that they are currently in contact with a violence prevention assistance program. Many reports indicate a broad approach to violence prevention, including services for substance abuse prevention and family strengthening. Among those frequently mentioned were local law enforcement agencies and local family services agencies.

- In addition, most CIS programs (74 percent) report conflict resolution activities in their school or community. Many said that their local school district included conflict resolution and peer mediation training in the curriculum, and a few indicated that the school program provided a student court. In other programs, CIS sponsored or provided for these activities and for training CIS and school staff. One curriculum mentioned as particularly strong (and on which CIS, Inc. offers training) is Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith's "Violence Prevention for Adolescents."

CIS programs respond to the violence epidemic by utilizing the best available community resources to build student awareness of and protection from violence. The following are reports on two such successful efforts.

❖ *Students Against Violence Everywhere — High Point, N.C.* (severity of violence: 7)

Peer mediation is one effective tool to help students stop violence before it starts. In High Point, N.C., 12 CIS freshmen and sophomores at High Point Central High School have been trained as peer mediators through Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE). This elective class is offered at two levels, with monthly follow-up sessions to continue honing the students' skills.

SAVE emphasizes the active involvement of the peer mediators as "eyes and ears," staying alert for arguments and disagreements among their peers that could escalate into violent confrontations. If one of the mediators gets wind of such a potential conflict, he or she can recommend that the students involved undergo a conflict resolution session. These sessions use two mediators, usually a male and a female, assisted by Ed McAdams, a teacher and CIS case manager at the school. McAdams has completed training in violence prevention and has worked to implement the SAVE program with the campus police officer.

There are incentives for students to agree to mediation: They can avoid suspension or, conversely, a refusal to mediate can result in immediate disciplinary action.

"Our kids are really connected," said McAdams. "Usually, it's something going on in the neighborhood that ends up here in school. We can't stop the sudden flare-ups of temper, but we're very effective in intervening when there's a problem brewing."

Mediation techniques focus on "issues, not personalities." At the end of each session, the mediators spend time working with the students on how to keep the newly de-escalated situation under control. Peer pressure from friends can often result in renewed acrimony, and students need to learn techniques to avoid being egged on by their peers.

❖ *PeaceWorks — Fort Worth, Texas* (severity of violence: 8)

PeaceWorks is a violence prevention and conflict resolution program now being offered at 11 elementary, middle and high school sites through CIS - Fort Worth. Eight more schools are on the waiting list to implement this highly effective initiative.

The program is taught in 12-week workshops averaging 20 students per session. Approximately 150 adults also receive 18 to 24 hours of training to implement the curriculum.

PeaceWorks has three fundamental objectives:

1. To teach conflict as a natural occurrence that can be managed either destructively or constructively.

2. To teach a core of emotional and social skills such as impulse control, anger management and problem-solving, enabling young people to find creative solutions to social predicaments.

3. To develop and assist in implementing peer mediation programs, some to include school-wide formats and training of students and teachers in problem-solving.

Teams of two to four trained community volunteers help facilitate each group. The lead facilitator is a CIS staff person. With the help of the volunteers, classrooms are broken down into small groups for more individual attention and greater sharing of ideas.

Beyond the PeaceWorks curriculum, the program also works to build a "community that cares" around each young person, involving several layers of mentors including adults from the child's immediate family or community, adults from traditional CIS sources (neighborhood youth agencies, mentoring organizations, etc.) and corporate sponsors to promote career awareness.

During the 1995-96 school year, more than 2,200 Fort Worth students completed the PeaceWorks program.

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Helping kids to help themselves

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